

Somenos Lake loop

The trip follows the Trans Canada Highway north from Beverly Street, passing beside the Somenos Marsh Conservation Area, a prime area for birding. It leaves the highway at the Forest Discovery Centre. The remainder of the trip is through rural countryside on quiet and safe roads. The return to Duncan is shared with the Quamichan Lake loop and the routes to Crofton and Chemainus. Distances are only given for a one-way trip, because if you go the other way you will miss the Somenos Conservation Area.

- 0 km Start at Beverly Street and the Trans Canada Highway. Ride north on the right (east) side of the highway.
- 0.5 km Open Air Classroom, including an interpretive sign and a boardwalk to bird viewing areas. The Somenos Conservation Area (an Important Bird Area), boardwalks, and viewing platforms are cared for by the Somenos Marsh Wildlife Society, a member of Nature Cowichan. Your donation will support protection of the area and improvements to the visitor facilities.
- 1.3 km Rest area. Another excellent nature-viewing location. Surprisingly, the rest area does not include a rest room.
- 1.5 km Pond with more birding opportunities. There is a footpath around the barbed wire just south of the pond.
- 2.1 km Turn right onto Drinkwater / Bell-McKinnon Roads. On the right is the Forest Discovery Centre with a steam train, old logging equipment, interpretive displays about the forest, a bird-viewing blind, and a walk through the forest.
- 2.1 km. Spur. Go straight on Drinkwater Road for 0.4 km for lake access and a dock with a viewing platform for a panorama of Somenos Lake.
- 2.1 km. Go left on Bell-McKinnon Road.
- 2.6 km Right on Norcross Road, a quiet country road with pleasant views.
- 4.9 km Right on Herd Road.
- 5.8 km Right on Mays Road. This quiet country road avoids a hill on Herd Road and takes you beside Richards Creek for a picnic or wildlife viewing.
- 6.5 km Richards Creek.
- 6.9 km Right on Herd Road.
- 7.2 km Junction. Right on Kensington. Straight ahead for Crofton, Chemainus, or Maple Bay.
- 7.8 km Mum's Park for a picnic or walk in the woods. Left on Buckingham.
- 8.2 km Right on Lakes Road
- 8.9 km Twenty Two Oaks Winery. Picnic area and wine tasting.
- 11.0 km Right on Townend Road, a firm dirt road.
- 11.7 km Left on a small short path, then right on York Road, before you get to the end of the road.
- 12.1 km Somenos Garry Oak Protected Area. This is the same endangered Garry Oak ecosystem which is protected by the Cowichan Garry Oak Preserve (see Quamichan Lake loop), but you are allowed to enter this one. A walk through the Area will be rewarded by views of native wildflowers and birds.

There are two ways to go from here. If the ground is dry and your tires are not too skinny, take the path to the left. When you get to a paved road, take the paved path to the right, then ride onto the grass where it says "No Motorized Vehicles." This is a ride on the lawn of an attractive public park beside Somenos Creek. You will reach the Beverly Street Roundabout at 13.3 km.

Otherwise, backtrack on York Road

- 12.3 km Right on Trillium Terrace.
- 13.1 km Right on Lakes Road. There is no bike lane and lots of traffic here, so ride on the sidewalk or use extreme caution.
- 13.6 km Junction. Right on Beverly Street at the Roundabout. It is 0.9 km back to the start of this loop, see the Duncan Access map. Straight ahead for the Quamichan Lake loop and Cowichan Bay ride.